

CALIFORNIA CONVICTS DO GOOD ROAD WORK

First Camp of Thirty Men Began Road Improvement Near Mendocino Last September.

MEN ARE BETTER PHYSICALLY

Highway Commission Now Prepares to Attack the Sierra Lateral Question by Placing Convicts on Each of the Four Roads at Once.

WASHINGTON, July 22.—Convict labor on State highways is one means of solving California's tremendous mountain road problem, which has been beyond the State's resources since the "early days of gold." The convict takes work from no man, but builds roads that others could not build. The law providing for convict road work became effective in August, 1915. In a bulletin of the California Highway Department, sent to the National Committee on Prisons, the progress of the work since that time is described as follows:

"In September the first camp of thirty men was established in Northern Mendocino. The scope of the work was gradually enlarged on a safety first basis. We carried two camps with 125 men through the winter, working every day but Sunday, through rain and snowfall of seventy inches. The men have been given sanitary camps and food that at least equal the best free labor camps. We have found them better living and working conditions, a large measure of personal freedom, and under the law, the crowning feature of one day's reduction of sentence for every two days of local work."

"The laying out and direction of the work has been in the hands of the Highway Commission, as well as providing camps, commissaries, etc. The discipline of the men has been in the hands of the board of prison directors, represented by three guards, without any in each camp—one acting as captain of the camp, the others as foremen on the work."

"The humanitarian side of the work is self-evident. The men are immeasurably bettered physically, which means mentally and morally, constructive work instead of the idle mill under blue skies and among the mountains of California instead of behind stone walls; cooperation with the State instead of being outcasts of the State—these things are alone worth the doing."

"But there is another side, without which the scheme would not solve the problem for which it is intended. These men have come soft from prison to a new work and discipline, which means they have to be supplied with everything they have or use—clothing, transportation, guards, food, beds, medical attention, as well as the ordinary expense for materials and equipment for road work—all this many miles of transportation—and the winter work shows a profit. Through the winter eight miles of difficult canyon road have been built for 25 per cent less than the estimate, and little more than half what similar work has cost on contract in the same locality. As weather conditions improve, costs are falling and yardage increasing."

"The success of the work in Mendocino led to the placing of a crew from Polson on a section of the Placerville road, near Shingle Springs. Only an inadequately small amount of maintenance funds were available for this section, but this experiment will give the equivalent of \$1,000 in work for an expenditure of \$5,000 and make possible an improved section of a needed road which otherwise must have waited for the next bond issue."

"The commission is now preparing to attack the Sierra Lateral question by placing convict camps on each of four of these roads for active construction this summer."

ROAD-BUILDER MUST BE A KEEN OBSERVER

He Must Also Be Ready to Welcome Good Advice From Every Source and a Careful Speaker.

The successful road-builder, even if he builds only dirt roads, must be a keen observer, a good thinker, an energetic worker, a careful spender of the money entrusted to him, and he must be ready to welcome good advice from every source. Such men are wanted in every walk of life. If they are once persuaded to look after roads, they should not be pestered by politics. It is politics which drives so many good men away from road work, but what are we going to do about it?

Colonel E. A. Stevens, a prominent member of the famous engineering family which founded Stevens Institute and has otherwise shown many evidences of its keen interest in education and public affairs, was persuaded some years ago to become commissioner of public roads of New Jersey, and his experience in that office he recently summed up as follows:

"It seems useless to expect to do the generalizing effect of a spoils system of patronage, of log-rolling and of the pork barrel, unless we can put the work in the hands of a body of men who by their personal character, trained ability and devotion to their work will earn their salaries. The confidence of the public, such a body of men does not grow on bushes. The individuals exist today, but they are trained to act for one end, and imbued with that spirit of teamwork that makes the successful combination of men, be they a football team or the force in a great institution."

"It is this need of organization, felt in other States as well as New Jersey, which is bringing about at present many local associations of road-builders, and is bringing the state and the local road officials into closer relations for mutual help. While politics is interfering with road improvements altogether too much, this interference is, however, a hopeful sign of the interest in the way their road taxes now condemned quite generally by taxpayers."

LITTLE ROADS "WAY BACK ON HILL" WILL BE IMPROVED

Federal Aid to State Roads Means Much to the Farmers of the United States.

WASHINGTON, D. C., July 22.—Conservatively estimated, \$1,500,000,000 will be expended by the Federal government, the State governments, the counties and the townships in the next five years on roads construction and maintenance, or an average of \$250,000,000 yearly.

It is around the \$150,000,000 jointly supplied by the national government and the several States, half and half, which has attracted the attention of the arteries of communication of the entire country will revolve. The roads receiving the joint attention of Federal and State authorities undoubtedly will serve as example highways, for the work which will range from the big trunk lines down to the little road reaching the farmers "way back on the hill."

When, on July 11, President Woodrow Wilson, in the presence of representatives of farmers' organizations, the American Automobile Association and the National Association of State Highway Officials, signed the Bankhead-Shuford bill, he thus commented:

"I take a great deal of pleasure in signing this bill and having a part in the good work that has been done, particularly because it tends to thread the various parts of the country together and assists the farmer in his intercourse with others."

While it is true that the linking together of main counties and State departments has considered this fact as a natural sequence of the general development and not to be primarily sought.

"Ultimately, we received credit for this broad interpretation of the situation," says former American Automobile Association President John A. Wilson. "But this recognition is made apparent by the fact that the pen used in the signing of the bill now reposes in the American Automobile Association headquarters in Washington. We are just plain American citizens, and we have sought general good in our insistence that the time had come for the national government to accept a percentage of the multiplying highway business."

"Thirty-four States have now outlined in some form a system of main trunk lines, which is now an anxiety for the success of the Federalaid plan just inaugurated. It should be noted that the signing of this bill was the first State to apply for its apportionment of the money, and California is expending \$15,000,000 on two main highways extending from the ocean to the Mexican line. It should be kept in mind that an application for Federal aid in the improvement of any road must be made by the highway department of the State. Consequently, if any State desires to have a road improved at the aid of Federal funds, it is necessary that the matter be taken up with the highway department and not with the Federal government, which will have the final say through the Secretary of Agriculture."

One provision of the Federal road bill, that a State must have a duly constituted highway department, is through which to deal with the national government. This means that Texas, Indiana, Georgia and South Carolina must follow the lead of the forty-four other States and do so within the next four years, and meanwhile their apportionment of the Federal money is being held up. "Texas receives the largest amount of all of the States, \$45,750,000. Indiana is second, receiving \$2,100,000, and while Georgia gets \$2,075,000 and South Carolina does fairly well, \$1,112,500."

"But it will be seen that before \$1,500,000,000 of the Federal \$25,000,000 expended, four States must centralize their highway labors."

INTERESTING HISTORY OF FIGHT FOR FEDERAL AID

Alexander Hamilton Was First to Urge National Funds for Road Improvement.

The use of national funds for road improvements was urged early in the history of this country by Alexander Hamilton. A little later Albert Gallatin succeeded in securing the passage of an act setting aside one-twentieth of the proceeds of the sale of public land in Ohio for building a highway from tidewater to the Ohio River. In 1806, President Jefferson appointed three commissioners to locate this route, which ran through Maryland, Pennsylvania and Virginia. The first contract for construction was placed in 1810, and in 1818 part of the road was opened to travel. It was called the National Road, and was built with national funds exclusively, so that the bill just passed by Congress to furnish money for roadbuilding purposes is nothing new. The Federal government did not have the same views then that it has now of the importance of maintaining highways. The National Road was the main thoroughfare for the heavy travel between the seaboard and the Ohio valley, and lack

of maintenance resulted in the road becoming very poor.

In 1831 Pennsylvania asked Congress to turn over to her care the portion of the road within her boundaries, and Maryland and Virginia also made a similar request somewhat later. Unfortunately, State control did not result in any marked improvement. The counties which had charge of the portions within their boundaries did not pay much attention to highway improvements, and it was not until the comparatively recent organization of State highway departments that the old National Road was given any real care. In the last ten years, however, reconstruction has been going on steadily. In about two years the entire length in Pennsylvania will be in good condition and the portion in Maryland is also very nearly reconstructed. Further west the old highway is not in such good condition, although sections of it have been rebuilt there. So this early venture in national roadbuilding, successful until the railroad took its place, is again in a prominent place among the highways of the country.

GOOD ROADS, SAYS EXPERT, NEED CONSTANT CARE

M. S. Willard Tells North Carolina Good Roads Men What Modern Roads Demand.

M. S. Willard, member of New Hampshire Board of County Commissioners and former chairman of the board, made a splendid address on the importance of road maintenance before the North Carolina Good Roads Association meeting recently held in Raleigh. In part he said:

"The most important thing to get into the minds of those who are concerned in the building of good roads is the one fact that there is no such thing as a permanent road. Some road engineer answered when asked how soon it would be necessary to commence repaving a good road after it was finished. The next day? There is hardly a day in the year when any specific mile of road couldn't have something done on it to advantage. It may be the cleaning of the ditches, the cutting of weeds alongside, the catching up of some raveled-out edge or the patching of some small hole. But the patch in times saves the other nine in road building just as effectively as it does in the patching of a partly worn garment."

In Favor of Road Signs.
The following resolution was adopted by the North Carolina Good Roads Association at a recent meeting:

"Resolved, That the North Carolina Good Roads Association favors the placing of road signs at every point on the public roads of the State where such signs would be of value to the traveling public."

Boone Way Being Houted.

During this year the Boone way will be hounded in Lenoir County, N. C. Boone's old home, within the next eighteen months will be routed to Warrenton, Mo. Boone's last home is 1,000 miles.

FOOL PROOF

The Wise Acetylene Gas Generator for lighting and cooking at the price of the storage and complicated machine. Write us for literature and our agency proposition in your territory.

1031 West Broad Street, RICHMOND, VA.

Save Your Tires BY USING



Frictionless Mica Powder, The Great Tire Saver.
COSTS ONLY 15c A TUBE!
But Saves Many Dollars.
Made By
RICHMOND MICA CO.
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BENJ. T. CRUMP CO., INC.
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GOVERNMENT AND STATES WORKING FOR GOOD ROADS

How \$75,000,000 of Uncle Sam's Money Will Be Apportioned Among the Commonwealths.

The act of Congress providing for the appropriation of \$75,000,000 to help the States build good roads, having been signed by the President, is now the law of the land. The bill provides that the total appropriation shall be extended over a five-year period and be available at the rate of \$15,000,000 for the first year, \$10,000,000 the second year, \$15,000,000 the third year, \$20,000,000 the fourth year and \$25,000,000 the fifth year. Under the working of the bill, Virginia will fall heir to the first good money each year. The first year this State will get \$102,000, the second year \$204,000, the third \$306,000, the fourth \$408,000, and the fifth \$510,000.

West Virginia will get for five years, annual amounts as follows: \$55,000, \$110,000, \$165,000, \$220,000 and \$275,000. North Carolina will come along in the following order: first year, \$116,000; second, \$232,000; third, \$348,000; fourth, \$464,000; and fifth, \$580,000.

The sixteen Southern and Southwest States will receive during each successive yearly period the following proportion of the amounts appropriated: first year, \$1,751,500; second year, \$3,503,000; third year, \$5,254,500; fourth year, \$7,006,000; fifth year, \$8,757,500; total, \$28,272,500.

It is stipulated in the bill that each State shall match dollar for dollar of funds which it receives from the national government, so that based upon the apportionments in the Southern States, during the next five years there will be \$1,000,000 for good roads, and in Virginia the sum of \$2,000,000, in addition to what counties, districts and towns may do of their own accord in the means.

OAKLAND

"Sturdy as the Oak"

Great strength with light weight.

High speed motor with great power.

Low center of gravity with usual road clearance.

Flying wedge lines with least wind resistance.

Economical, yet luxurious.

Alsop Motor Co., Inc.
114 West Broad.



"And the Little Ford Shall Lead Them"
Kaehler Motor Company
Corner Broad and Rylant, RICHMOND VA.

Entire Road Absorbed.

ABINGDON, VA., July 22.—The Norfolk and Western Railway has purchased nearly all of the stock in the Virginia-Carolina Railway held by W. E. Mingea, of Abingdon. Three years ago the Norfolk and Western acquired 51 per cent of the stock preliminary to building its last extension into North Carolina. Since it obtained control of the road the Norfolk and Western has yet no announcement of further extension work upon it, completing last year thirty-two miles of line from Tuckerdale to Elkland, N. C., which is building its last extension into North Carolina. Since it obtained control of the road the Norfolk and Western has yet no announcement of further extension work upon it, completing last year thirty-two miles of line from Tuckerdale to Elkland, N. C., which is building its last extension into North Carolina. Since it obtained control of the road the Norfolk and Western has yet no announcement of further extension work upon it, completing last year thirty-two miles of line from Tuckerdale to Elkland, N. C., which is building its last extension into North Carolina.

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